

IRAN'S POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR II

served as a springboard for more ambitious politicians who, not content with their seats in the Majlis, tried to rally around themselves, an organized group of supporters.

From the viewpoint of the development of Iranian democracy one must admit that these parties, despite all their shortcomings, were playing a useful role. They kept alive interest in public affairs and encouraged independent thinking among their members. One of the younger and more prominent deputies in the Fourteenth Majlis, Farmand, declared in 1944 that the young Iranian democracy stood in need of political parties. Since these parties adopted similar programs, he believed that it would be wise to fuse them into one single party.⁹

Farmand's statement was not devoid of wisdom. All these political parties possessed the common feature of nationalism and espoused the common end of democracy. Lacking good organization and discipline, they would have gained by uniting their efforts. As small groups they failed to have a mass following. Consequently their political action was largely ineffective.

THE PRESS

The collapse of the old regime also acted as a stimulant to all those who wanted to express their opinions in writing. If the number of political parties was unusual, even more amazing was the sudden growth of the press. From the time of the entry of the Allies into Iran approximately one hundred and fifty newspapers and periodicals appeared within two years. They were even more ephemeral than the parties. Many of them were liquidated for lack of funds; many were suspended by the government, which possessed the right under mar-

tial law to prohibit any publication. In 1944-1945 the number of newspapers and periodicals published in Teheran alone was approximately fifty. Some of the papers were the organs of political parties, for example, *Mihan Parestan* (Mihan party), *Shafaq* (Iran party), *Shiam* (Hamrahan party), *Neda-yi-Mellat* (Mardom party), and *Adalat* (Adalat party). But the majority of newspapers had no stable political affiliation. Sometimes they were created with the sole object of securing income for their publishers. Since the circulation of these

9 *Journal de Tehran*, May 11, 1944.